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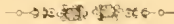
EARLY HISTORY OF LENAWEE COUNTY

AND OF THE

CITY OF ADRIAN

FROM

*The First Settlement of the County.*



HISTORICAL ORATION

DELIVERED AT

ADRIAN, JULY 4, 1876.



By Alfred B. Millard.



ADRIAN, MICH. :  
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THE following discourse was prepared and delivered at Adrian at a celebration of the Nation's Centennial Anniversary, in pursuance of the following recommendation of Congress and of the Governor, and is published under a resolution of the Common Council of the City of Adrian:

STATE OF MICHIGAN, EXECUTIVE OFFICE, {  
LANSING, May 16, 1876. }

To the People of the State of Michigan :

I have received notice from the office of the Department of State, at Washington, of the passage by Congress of the following joint resolution:

*"Be it resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That it be, and is hereby recommended by the Senate and House of Representatives to the people of the several States, that they assemble in their several counties or towns on the approaching Centennial anniversary of our National Independence, and that they cause to be delivered on such a day an historical sketch of said county or town from its foundation, and that a copy of said sketch may be filed, in print or in manuscript, in the Clerk's office of said county, and an additional copy, in print or manuscript, be filed in the office of the Librarian of Congress, to the intent that a complete record may thus be obtained of the progress of our institutions during the first centennial of their existence."*

Approved March 13th, 1876.

I earnestly hope that in the celebration of the anniversary of our national independence in this State, the recommendation may be universally regarded. Our record is yet new and familiar to us, our development and growth is a history of continued prosperity, and it is eminently proper, in this Centennial year, while recalling with gratitude the beneficence of Divine Providence in His dealings with us, that we should put upon record, for those who are to come after us, the history of a State that in forty years has grown to be an empire with a million and a half of people—educated in public schools—blest in a common prosperity—and united as citizens by a common patriotism.

In addition to the request of Congress that copies of the sketches be filed in the Library of Congress, and the county records, I suggest that copies be sent to the State Library at Lansing.

By the Governor,

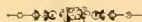
JOHN J. BAGLEY.

E. G. HOLDEN, Secretary of State.





## ORATION.



ELLOWS CITIZENS : For the last ninety-nine years our countrymen have been wont to celebrate this day—to hail its annual return with demonstrations of rejoicing, with the ringing of bells, with bonfires and illuminations, and the roar of artillery, with gatherings of the people, processions and orations, and with songs of thanksgiving and praise.

We meet to-day as we have so often before, to observe the day in the time-honored way. But the *one hundredth anniversary*—the very words suggest a high distinction, a wide difference between this and its predecessors. It tells us that our experiment of self-government is no longer an experiment, but a success ; sets the seal of stability and permanence on our institutions, and our Republic, and proves that our union and government are not ephemeral, as was in the beginning prophesied by their enemies and feared even by their friends.

There is reason, in view of this, that in the annual discourse which is usual on the occasion, we should depart somewhat from the beaten track.

The Congress of the United States has recommended that the discourse on this Centennial anniversary should be a historical sketch of the county or town from its formation.

This recommendation has been supported by the President, and the Executive of our own State, and a compliance with it, if general, will be both appropriate and useful.

To this duty which has been assigned to me, that of the historian rather than the orator, I now address myself for the brief half hour allotted, assured that however inadequately and imperfectly it may be performed, the subject and the facts cannot fail to interest the citizens at least of our own county, and will not, I trust, be entirely without interest to our fellow citizens from other counties who join with us to-day. And in behalf too of those who shall come after us, it is well, while the witnesses and actors in the earlier scenes and struggles incident to the settlement of a new country are a portion of them still living, to secure from their lips and res-

ene from the oblivion which a few years more would otherwise throw over them, an authentic history of those early times.

Our history is not a long one. He who sketches it has not to go back to a remote antiquity. Our beautiful and cherished county, with its population to-day of 47,000, its central city of 10,000, its 26 townships and wards, and in each of these townships its highly cultivated and productive farms, its numerous and populous and thriving villages, its schools and college, its churches, railroads, and telegraphs, and its abundant evidences of wealth and comfort and refinement on every hand, what was it at the beginning of 1824? An unbroken wilderness. Not a white inhabitant within its bounds. But as it then was, all in its native beauty, untouched by the hand of civilization, unmarred by cultivation, a fairer, more beautiful and attractive region, the sun ne'er shone on. A portion of it, most of the northern, and a part of the southern portion, consisting of "openings," as they were called in the language of the country—sparsely timbered with tall and beautiful oaks, and for the most part, in consequence of the annual fires passing over it, free from underbrush,—the ground carpeted with a profusion of wild flowers,—the whole like a beautiful park, through which, without track or path, the immigrant could drive with his horses or oxen and wagon, for miles in any direction—the remainder a dense forest of various kinds of trees; the surface undulating, well watered by the Raisin, the Tiffin, and a multitude of smaller streams, and gemmed here and there, especially in the northern portion, with beautiful small, clear lakes—it is no wonder that the earlier settlers were enchanted with the scene, and in their letters to their friends, spoke in glowing terms of its beauty and its loveliness.

But the time had come when this fair region was no longer to be left to the wild men and wild beasts of the forest, hitherto its sole possessors.

By a treaty concluded at Detroit on the 17th of November, 1807, between the United States and the Ottawa, Chippewa, Wyandotte and Pottawatomie nations of Indians, the Indians ceded to the United States a large tract of country in northern Ohio and southeastern Michigan, including the present county of Lenawee; and by another treaty concluded at Chicago, on the 29th of August, 1821, between the United States and the Ottawa, Chippewa and Pottawatomie tribes, the Indian title to another extensive tract in Michigan, west of the tract first mentioned, and extending to Lake Michigan, was also extinguished, and the territory in both cases acquired by the United States by fair purchase.

In the summer of 1823, Musgrove Evans, of Brownsville, Jefferson Co.,

N. Y., came into the territory to explore, with a view to settlement, and found his way to the site of the present village of Tecumseh. The tract had before this been surveyed and put into market by the United States. Mr. Evans, impressed with the beauty of the country, and the advantages of that particular locality, particularly the hydraulic power afforded by the river Raisin and Evans creek at that point, determined to settle and lay out a village there, and to secure and improve this water power. Returning to his home in New York, he enlisted in his enterprise, his brother-in-law, Joseph W. Brown, of the same place, afterwards Gen. Brown, now of Cleveland, O., who subsequently played a prominent part in the affairs of the Territory and State, both civil and military, and who still survives in a hale and green old age, to see and rejoice over the wonderful development and advance in all the elements of prosperity and greatness of this new county and commonwealth, in which, while yet in the unbroken solitude of its wilderness he made his home, and to the development and growth of which he devoted the prime of his manhood, and in no small degree contributed.

Mr. Evans returned in the spring of 1824, with Mr. Brown and some ten or twelve others, coming from Buffalo in a schooner, and landing at Detroit, where for the time being he left his family. From thence with packs on their backs containing provisions and such necessities as were required for their journey, they made their way on foot through the forest to the place previously selected by Evans, where the village of Tecumseh now stands.

In his first visit to the territory, the fall previous, Evans had met with Austin E. Wing, of Monroe, who had been for several years a resident of the territory—a man of intelligence and influence, who afterwards for several years represented the territory of Michigan in Congress as its delegate. It was through his advice and representations of its advantages, that Evans had his attention turned to the Valley of the Raisin, and especially to the water power at the junction of Evans creek with the Raisin.

On the arrival of Evans and Brown, in the spring of 1824, a co-partnership was formed between these three, Wing, Evans and Brown, and they became jointly interested in the enterprise of founding a village, and improving the water power at the point before mentioned. In anticipation of this, and before the return of Evans, Wing had taken up at the Land office, at Detroit, the west part of section 27, and the east part of section 28, which included the water power in that portion of Tecumseh now known as Brownsville; and subsequently after the arrival of Evans and Brown, they took up the north half of section 34, of the same township.

On the 2d of June of that year (1824), Evans, having in the meantime built a rude log house upon the premises, the roof and floor of which were made of bark stripped off the neighboring trees, brought his family, consisting of a wife and five children, with a man named Peter Benson and his wife who were in his employ, from Detroit, and took possession of this log hut. These two were the first white women, and this family the first white inhabitants within the bounds of Lenawee county; and thus the settlement of this large and now populous county was begun.

In this first log house, the pioneer of the comfortable, substantial, and often spacious and elegant dwellings and mansions which now meet the eye over the whole county, three families domiciled during the winter of 1824-5, Mr. Evans, Mr. Brown, each with a family of five children, and Mr. George Spafford and wife, and some ten or twelve men in addition, among them Mr. E. F. Blood, who was one of those that came in with them, and who took up a lot of land in the neighborhood from the government, to cultivate as a farm, and who continues to reside on the same to this day.

Indians were numerous, often visiting and supplying them with berries and the products of the chase, but not a white neighbor nearer than Monroe, 33 miles, or a family or two on the Raisin, a few miles above Monroe. The Indians, mostly of the Pottawatomie tribe, though at times objects of apprehension and fear, especially to the women and children, proved friendly and gave little trouble.

Here these three families, all accustomed to the comforts, luxuries and refinements of civilization and wealth, spent together a not unhappy or cheerless winter. The weather was mild, and shut out though they were from the rest of the world, a wilderness almost pathless lying between them and Monroe, the nearest settlement to which they could look for supplies or assistance, and surrounded by bands of wild Indians, to whose character for treachery and ferocity, though then apparently friendly, these settlers were no strangers—yet there was much in the wild and romantic beauty of the native forest, in the novelty and excitement of the strange life they were living, and in the bright hopes of the future, which buoyed them up amidst the privations and the hardships incident to such circumstances; and thus these stout hearted and resolute men, and these not less courageous and noble women remained, abandoning the comforts and luxuries of their former homes, and giving themselves to the new enterprise in which they had enlisted, laid the foundations of civilized society and Christian institutions in this wilderness of Southern Michigan.



A short extract from a letter written about this time by Mr. Evans (who, by the way, was of the same religious faith with Wm. Penn), to Mr. Brown, who had then returned to Brownville for his family, dated Tecumseh, 8th mo., 8th, 1824, will serve to give us a sample of the shifts and devices to which these first settlers were often compelled to resort. The letter, after acknowledging the receipt that morning of Brown's letter of the 6th ult., *one month* after the date, says, among other things : "The articles thee mentions will all be good here, particularly the stove, as it takes some time always in a new place to get ovens and chimneys convenient for cooking. We have neither, yet, and no other way of baking for twenty people but in a bake-kettle and the fire out at the door."

Immediately after getting upon the ground, this company, Wing, Evans & Brown, commenced the erection of a saw mill, which they built and put in operation in the fall of 1824, the first saw mill in the county, and an institution of the highest necessity and value to the infant settlement.

To raise the frame of this mill they were obliged to go to Monroe for assistance, and brought from there some forty men.

During the summer of 1824, a plat of the village was laid out by the proprietors, Wing, Evans & Brown, and called Tecumseh, after the name of the fierce chieftain, who, though the home of his tribe was far away on the banks of the Sciota, in southern Ohio, it is said had often with his dusky Shawanees visited this locality and made his camping ground in its immediate vicinity ; and thenceforth the new town, though it did as yet consist of a single log house, had not only an existence but a name.

During the same season a post-office was established here, and Mr. Evans was the first postmaster.

Thus the time for a letter by due course of mail, between Brownville, New York, and Tecumseh, at that time was one month, and the postage twenty-five cents.

In the fall of the next year, 1825, the first crop of wheat raised in the county was sown by Mr. Jesse Osborn, on a lot taken up by him near the village plat, and a little north of the present residence of Judge Stacy, and was harvested the next summer, in time to be ground on the fourth of July, at the new grist mill just then erected, and which we shall notice more fully presently, and from the flour of which cake and biscuit were made by Mrs. Brown for the dinner at the celebration that day. This first crop of wheat was a success. It ripened early and was quite satisfactory, both in quality

and quantity, and proved the soil and climate well adapted to this important cereal.

Having thus established the first town in the county, this enterprising firm of Wing, Evans & Brown, took measures to get the county seat established there. A petition was sent to the Territorial Governor, Gen. Cass, who appointed commissioners to examine, select and report a location for the same. These commissioners located it at Tecumseh, upon the land of this firm, the northwest quarter of section thirty-four, and upon their report the same was established as the county seat, by an Act of the Legislative council, approved June 30, 1824.

A somewhat amusing incident, attending this location, is related in one of the old letters I have seen. When the commissioners fixed upon the site and stuck the stake to mark the place for the Court House, the company present, among whom was Mr. Wing, swung their hats and gave three lusty cheers. Mr. Wing, in the ardor of his enthusiasm, swung his hat with such emphasis and force that at the last whirl it flew several rods away, leaving in his hand a piece of the brim about the size of a dollar. The writer of the letter adds that it was an old hat, and probably a little cracked in the brim.

These proprietors and the citizens of Tecumseh, were naturally much elated, and expected great things for their new town from the location there of the county seat—expectations which, however, were destined to be but partially realized, as in the progress of events, it was, after the lapse of a few years, removed to Adrian.

Up to the time of which we have been speaking, the county of Lenawee had not been organized. It was attached to and constituted a part of the county of Monroe. It received an independent organization by an act of the Legislative Council, approved December 20, 1826, and was of ample territorial limits, having attached to it and made a part of it, for the time being, all the country within the Territory, to which the Indian title was extinguished at the treaty of Chicago, before mentioned, its western boundary being mostly Lake Michigan, and its northern Grand River, from its source to its mouth.

The name Lenawee is a Shawanee word, meaning Indian.

In the appointment of officers for the new county, Joseph W. Brown was commissioned by Gov. Cass as Chief Justice of the county court, a position which, however, he soon resigned, and was succeeded by Stillman Blanchard.

who has deceased at Tecumseh within the last year. James Patchin was the first sheriff—all of Tecumseh.

The first townships organized in the county were three, Tecumseh, Logan, and Blissfield. They were organized by an act of the Legislative Council, approved April 12, 1827, and embraced the whole of the present county; Tecumseh at the north, Logan in the middle, and Blissfield at the south, each extending across the entire county from east to west.

The three families first mentioned did not long remain the only families in the settlement. The track being opened, they were soon followed by others, and their village soon became a village in fact, and not a mere paper town, and the log house was succeeded by more substantial and comfortable dwellings, and here and there in its vicinity, a sturdy pioneer, attracted by the richness of the soil and manifold advantages for agriculture, had taken up a lot for that purpose, and commenced clearing the same for a farm.

In 1836, this company, Wing, Evans & Brown, built a grist mill on their site upon the Raisin, the first in the county, and a great acquisition to the new settlement, much needed and highly prized. It contained but a single run of stones, but sufficed for grinding for all the inhabitants of the county for several years.

The dam raised, and the frame of the mill up, it remained to supply the stones. How this was to be done, was a problem not easy of solution. To procure and transport a pair of French burr mill stones from the far East, and through the forest from Monroe, or Detroit, to Tecumseh, in the condition the roads were in at that time, would be a heavy expense, and a work of no small difficulty. But these proprietors were not to be baffled. A large stone, a rock of granite, was found lying upon the ground, a mile or two from the mill, broken into two unequal pieces by the falling of a tree upon it. By the aid of a practical miller, Sylvester Blackmar, this stone was prepared, and made to answer the desired purpose, the smaller fragment serving as the upper stone, and the larger as the lower, and answering the purpose very well for several years, and until better ones could be procured.

On the 4th of July of this year, 1826, the inhabitants, with no less patriotism in their hearts here in the wilds of Michigan than in older portions of the country, turned out *en masse* and held at Tecumseh the first formal celebration of the day that the county had known—just fifty years ago to-day.

In 1828, an organization of the militia took place in the county, under the order of Gov. Cass, and Joseph W. Brown, afterward Gen. Brown, was

commissioned as Colonel of the regiment then formed, being the eighth regiment of the Territorial militia.

Thus this new settlement and new town in the wilderness, and the enterprise of its first proprietors, moved on and prospered, and bade fair to realize in full their hopes and expectations.

But the time had now come when Tecumseh alone was no longer Lenawee county, and was no longer to enjoy a monopoly of its political, social and commercial advantages. A formidable competitor was just starting in the race, destined to rival and ultimately to outstrip her.

In the summer of 1825, Addison J. Comstock, then a young man, with Darins Comstock, his father, of Niagara county, New York, came into the Territory with a view of seeking a location. The elder Comstock selected and purchased from the Government a tract in the present township of Raisin, at the place known as the Valley, midway between Tecumseh and Adrian. The younger Comstock, in September of that year, purchased and received a patent from the Government for 480 acres of land, on which he subsequently laid out and platted the village of Adrian, and comprising the larger portion of the present city of Adrian. This was near, though a little east of the geographical center of the county—that is of the county of Lenawee proper, according to its present boundaries. Mr. Comstock returning to New York, was married during the following winter to Miss Sarah S. Dean, a daughter of Isaac Dean, of Phelps, Ontario Co., N. Y.

In the spring of 1826 he returned with his bride to take permanent possession of his new purchase, and make a home in the wilderness, as it then was. Mr. John Gifford, a man in the employ of Mr. Comstock, with his wife, came with them. Two log houses, one for each family, were speedily put up by them, into which they moved in August of that year, Mr. Gifford occupying his first by a few days; and these two women being the first white female residents of Adrian. Mr. Comstock's house was in the oak grove, on the bank of the river, where Mrs. Chloe Jones now lives, and Mr. Gifford's was in the immediate vicinity. Mrs. Gifford is still living, or was recently, in St. Joseph Co., in this State. The other three of these first inhabitants of Adrian are all sleeping beneath its soil. During the same year Mr. Comstock erected a saw mill on the Raisin, near his residence, and completed it in November, 1826, being the second saw mill in the county. The whole population of the south half of the county at this time consisted of seven families, but it speedily increased by immigration.



The county being organized in 1826, as before noticed, the first township election for the township of Logan, in which Adrian was situated, was held at the house of Darins Comstock, in the Valley, on May 28, 1827, at which Darins Comstock was elected Supervisor, and Addison J. Comstock township clerk.

A letter written by Gen. Brown at this time, bearing date January 14th, 1827, says : "The Legislative Council have organized three new counties, this winter, and in none of them was there a white inhabitant in the year 1823, and in ours not till June, 1824. This is the youngest and smallest of the three, and we have more than 600 inhabitants." The other two counties referred to in this letter were Washtenaw and Chippewa.

During this year, 1827, the first frame dwelling house was erected by Dr. Caleb N. Ormsby, the first physician in Adrian.

Did time permit it would be pleasant to take some notice of others of the earlier settlers in Adrian, Noah Norton, James Whitney, the father of two of our well-known citizens of to-day, Elias Dennis and others. But we must forbear, only noticing a few of the more prominent facts and incidents in the history of this early time.

The original plat of the village of Adrian was laid out by A. J. Comstock, and recorded in the Register's office on April 1, 1828. Unlike the inflated paper cities so common in that day, it was modest in its proportions and pretensions—consisting only of two streets, equal in length, and crossing at right angles : Manmee, extending from the lot where the Gibson House now stands, as far east as the present residence of Wm. A. Whitney and the Presbyterian church, and Main, and forty-nine lots in all. From this it may be inferred that the proprietor at that time had little anticipation of what his new-founded village was destined to become in the not distant future.

The same year, 1828, a post-office was established here, with A. J. Comstock as postmaster. The following somewhat amusing account given by Mr. Comstock, and which I take from a document prepared by him, and deposited under the corner stone of the old Union school house, will serve to show something of the condition of things in that early day. He says : "The same year a post-office was established in Adrian, A. J. Comstock, P. M. The conditions of establishing the office were that the contractor should take the net revenue of the office for transporting the mail from Adrian to Monroe. The whole receipts of the first quarter, ending March 31, 1829, was \$8.60 $\frac{3}{4}$ . The net revenue to the contractor, after paying expenses of of-

fice, 90 $\frac{3}{4}$  cents. It should be remarked that the carrying of the mail was not expensive, as the postmaster took advantage of the ox teams that made regular trips to Monroe, and so obtained the mail about every week, as a trip to Monroe and back could be performed in about five days when they had good luck."

But lack of time compels me to pass rapidly over the history of that early day and the interesting incidents connected with it.

The question of the removal of the county seat from Tecumseh to Adrian began very early to be agitated, being strongly urged by Mr. Comstock and the citizens of Adrian. Tecumseh had secured its first location before Adrian had an existence, and a court house and jail (the latter of logs), had been built there. All the county offices were there, and the political influence of the county centered there, and the larger portion of the population was in and around that town. But immigration began to find its way into the central and southern portions. In the township of Blissfield a settlement had been begun even earlier than in Adrian, Hervey Bliss having moved in there with his family in December, 1824, followed the next year and the year following by several other families.

From the first settlement of Adrian this question of the county seat became a matter of contention and strife between the neighboring towns—an unhappy controversy, engendering bitter feelings at the time, kept up for a series of years, and terminating not until 1836, when by an Act of the Legislature, under the new State government, it was removed to Adrian, and the question was put at rest. The removal by the terms of the Act was not to take effect, however, until the first Monday of November, 1838.

The defeat that Tecumseh suffered in this was not owing to any lack of effort or lack of ability on the part its leading men. A high degree of both was abundantly manifest in the conduct of the controversy. They only yielded to the inevitable. It was the advantage of position alone which secured the victory to its rival. Adrian being central, while Tecumseh was far to the north and east of the centre, it was not difficult to see from the first that the removal was only a question of time.

It was not until 1838, when a jail having been built at Adrian, the courts, which up to that time, in pursuance of the Act, had been held in Tecumseh, commenced to hold their sessions at Adrian, and the removal was complete. The new court house was built at Adrian the next year, 1839, on the lot adjoining the jail lot, on land donated for that purpose by Mr. Comstock,

on the east side of Clinton street. This removal contributed not a little to the growth and prosperity of Adrian.

But to go back again to earlier times. The publication of the *Lenawee Republican and Adrian Gazette*, the first newspaper in the county, was commenced in October, 1834, by R. W. Ingals, who still resides here. This paper was neutral in politics, but after a few months was changed to the *Adrian Watchtower*, Democratic, and as such, its publication was continued until 1865, for many years as a weekly, and afterwards both weekly and daily—Mr. Ingals retaining his connection with it until near the close.

An enterprise second to no other in its importance and effect upon the early growth and development of Adrian and the country about it, extending far into the interior and western portion of the State, was the *Erie & Kalamazoo railroad*, projected and built at a very early day from Adrian to Toledo, then Port Lawrence.

The importance of this work, and the magnitude of the undertaking, considering the time and circumstances under which it was undertaken, have been by few fully appreciated. It was undertaken and accomplished by a few men of moderate means at Adrian and Port Lawrence, both then new settlements, at a time when there not only was not a railroad in Michigan, but none west of Lake Erie—nay, not one, or but one, in all New England, or (west of Schenectady), in New York. They were at that time a new thing, but recently introduced into this country. There was the road between Albany and Schenectady, the first link in the chain of the present New York Central, and run by stationary engines and horse power, and there were short roads in some portions of Pennsylvania. But in all the west such a thing as a railroad was unknown.

Necessity was no doubt the mother of the enterprise. The new and growing village of Adrian and all the new settlements in the county were separated and cut off from communication with the older portions of the country, except by a track cut through a dense forest, and much of the time almost impassable, even with oxen, to Monroe, thirty miles, or a like road and distance to Port Lawrence, or the longer route to Detroit. Port Lawrence was situated upon the navigable waters connected with Lake Erie, and when that was reached there was ready access to the rest of the world. Tecumseh, then or soon after, had its La Plaisance Bay turnpike, opened by the general government, and constituting a good highway to the lake at Monroe. Adrian, unaided by the government, conceived the idea of a railroad, to be built by private enterprise, which should open easy communi-

tion with navigable waters and the outside world. A few men at Adrian and its vicinity, among whom may be named Darius Comstock, Addison J. Comstock, George Crane, E. C. Winter, Caleb N. Ormsby and Joseph Gibbon, together with a few at Port Lawrence, entered actively into this enterprise and carried it successfully through, in the face of difficulties and discouragements that similar enterprises rarely have had to contend with. A charter for the road was obtained from the Legislative Council of Michigan, in April, 1833, authorizing the construction of a railroad from Port Lawrence to Adrian, and thence to such point on the Kalamazoo river as the company might select, the original project being to make the Kalamazoo the ultimate terminus, though that portion of the route west of Adrian was subsequently abandoned. Books of subscription for the stock were opened at Adrian, in March, 1834, and the amount required to organize the company, being \$50,000, the whole capital, by the terms of the Act, being \$1,000,000, was soon subscribed, and the company was fully organized in May of that year, and immediately entered upon the work.

It was not at first contemplated to run locomotives upon the road, but it was constructed with wooden rails, with a view to run by horse power, and for a time it was so run. It was finished so that the cars commenced running between Port Lawrence and Adrian in 1836. It continued to run by horse power until June of 1837, when the wooden rail gave place to an iron strap rail, and the horses were superseded by a locomotive.

The opening of this road formed a new era. It accomplished all and more than was anticipated from it by its enterprising projectors, and gave a new impetus to the growth and prosperity of Adrian, and the settlement and development of the surrounding country—drawing to it for shipment the grain and produce, and attracting the trade, of a wide extent of country, northward and westward and southward—for a time, especially westward and southward, even beyond the limits of the State, though this, of course, has since been greatly restricted by the opening of other roads and new channels of trade and commerce, elsewhere.

Up to this time a journey from Adrian to New York could be accomplished with diligence in about three weeks. It now takes 27 hours. Our fellow-townsmen, Abel Whitney, Esq., informs me that in March, 1837, he made this journey—going from Adrian to Toledo by this new railroad, then run by horse power, thence by stage to Cleveland, and thence over the route through Central Pennsylvania, using the best facilities the public conveyances afforded, a part of the way for short distances by railway, a part by canal,



nal, and the remainder by stage, and reaching New York three weeks from the time he left home. This, of course, was at a season of the year when navigation on Lake Erie was not open.

The Erie & Kalamazoo road became subsequently and is now a section of that great thoroughfare, the Lake Shore and Michigan Southern Railway, having in 1849 been leased by the company for the whole unexpired time of its charter to the Michigan Southern & Northern Indiana R. R. Co., subsequently incorporated into the L. S. & M. S. Ry. Co.

This pioneer railroad was soon followed by another, of greater extent and more important to the country at large, if not to Adrian. The Michigan Southern R. R. was laid out by the State, to be constructed as a State work, from Lake Erie, at Monroe, to Lake Michigan, running through the county of Lenawee. This road was completed from Monroe to Adrian in 1839, and to Hillsdale in 1843, and was operated by the State until in 1846 it was sold to the M. S. R. R. Co. then incorporated.

Another contest arose between Adrian and Tecumseh in respect to the route of this road—two lines being projected, one running through Adrian and the other through Tecumseh. A high degree of interest was felt in this question, each town being of course naturally anxious to secure to itself its location. The commissioners decided finally to lay it through Adrian, and it was so constructed, and its advantages secured to the latter town. A connection with this road was, however, subsequently secured to Tecumseh by the construction of the Jackson branch of the same, running through that town.

In 1836 Adrian was incorporated as a village by an act of the Legislature, and on the 31st of January, 1853, it was in like manner incorporated as a city, with four wards, and so it still remains.

This imperfect sketch of some of the leading facts in the history of our beautiful city, ought not to close without an allusion at least to some interests of a higher nature than its material advantages. Its commodious and elegant churches—Congregational, Episcopal, Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran and Catholic—its college, with its eleven professors and tutors, and near two hundred students; its public schools, with its Central and four branch or ward school houses, unsurpassed in comfort, convenience and elegance, and in all their appointments, by any town in the land, and the schools, in their thorough and liberal course of instruction, in the character of their teachers, and in all that is desirable in institutions of this kind, equalled by few and

excelled by none ; its two daily and three weekly newspapers—all these and others are well worthy of a more extended notice than it is possible to give them in the limited time at our disposal.

Nor ought we to pass over other portions of the county without some notice, though necessarily very brief.

The settlement of the town of Blissfield, as we have before noticed, was almost cotemporaneous with that of Tecumseh, the first inhabitant, Mr. Bliss, locating there in December, 1824, and being followed the next year by two or three other families, and the year following by still more. It now has the thriving and important village of Blissfield, and is a populous and wealthy township.

In 1833 the first opening was made in the present township of Seneca, by Gershum Bennett and Francis Hagaman, putting up the first log cabin in the extreme southern portion of the county. The flourishing village of Morenci is situated in this township.

In the same year the first settler located himself in the present township of Hudson—Hiram Kidder.

In the north-western portion of the county, the township of Cambridge, with its high, rolling surface and its clear streams and beautiful lakes, the first actual settler was Charles Blackmar, in 1829. Its charming lakes early attracted people of culture and taste, as settlers, and have ever since made it a favorite resort, as it continues to be, during the summer season, of large numbers who go to enjoy the quiet loveliness of its lakes, and to bathe and fish in their clear waters.

These first settlers in all the towns we have mentioned (and the same is true, probably, of most or all the remaining towns), almost without exception emigrated from the State of New York, which noble State has furnished by far the larger part of the immigration during the whole period of its settlement. The New England States and other northern States, however, have contributed liberally, and we have in addition quite a large element of the better class of European emigrants, English, Scotch, Irish and German. It is safe to say that no county at the west can boast a better class of immigrants, and few, after the immigration once set in, have filled up more rapidly. The population, according to the census of 1874, just fifty years after the first settler entered its bounds, was 46,084, being the fourth county in point of population in the State.

In character with the New York and New England origin of the early settlers, the school house and the church have gone up in the new settlements

almost simultaneously with the first log cabins, and no county of the west, not its superior in age, is better supplied with both, or with those of a better character—the architecture and surroundings of the school houses, and the arrangements for the comfort and convenience of the pupils, as well in the rural portions of the county as in the towns, being in many cases highly creditable to the taste and judgment of the inhabitants, and not inferior to those of any other portion of the country. Much attention has been given to make the school house, where the children are taught, attractive and pleasant, as they should be, and in this respect there has been a large advance within the last twenty-five years—and the school houses of the present day are very unlike the bare and unattractive ones in which many of us were taught.

But we have said nothing as yet about the *wars* in which the county has been involved, except the war about the county seat, and in that no blood was shed. Other wars it has had, calling its martial population into the field once and again, though fortunately these last mentioned wars in the end turned out, as far as they were concerned, as bloodless as the first. The first was the Black Hawk war of 1832.

There was great alarm through the scattered settlements of Michigan, when intelligence came by a messenger sent by the Indian agent at Chicago, and through other channels, that the Indians, the Sacs and Foxes, under the noted Black Hawk, had collected in large numbers in the vicinity of Fox River, and had commenced hostilities, that they were making their way eastward, murdering the white inhabitants and threatening Chicago, at that time an insignificant trading post, though protected by a fort; with a strong probability that if that fell into their hands they would continue their way eastward through the feeble settlements in northern Indiana and Michigan to Canada.

A request was made by the agent at Chicago that a force of militia of Michigan might be sent speedily to their assistance for their protection until aid could be procured from the U. S. forces.

Many exaggerated stories of the depredations and atrocities of the Indians came through other channels.

It is difficult for us at the present time, in the security of our homes, and happily without experience of danger from hostile savages, to realize the degree of excitement and alarm which these rumors, growing as they went, and magnifying the forces of the Indians and the number of their victims, produced among the scattered and exposed settlements of the frontier, at that

time. It was greatly feared, too, that the Indians of our own section, the apparently friendly Pottawatomies, might be induced to join the league, and make common cause with their red brethren against the whites. Who could lie down at night with the assurance that they would not at the midnight hour be aroused by the terrible war-whoop, and awake to find their dwellings in flames, and the deadly rifle or the tomahawk and scalping knife of their merciless savage foe gleaming in the light? The inhabitants of Chicago, many of them, took refuge in the fort, and many isolated families in the new settlements of Indiana and Michigan, forsook their homes and sought security elsewhere.

The pioneers of the Raisin Valley and of southern Michigan were no cowards. Gen. Brown was at that time in command of the Third Brigade of Michigan militia, embracing several regiments in Lenawee and the counties west of it as far as Niles. Without waiting for an order from the Territorial Governor (which, however, came soon after), upon the receipt of this intelligence and the call of the Indian agent, he issued an order calling out the regiments in his brigade and ordering them to rendezvous as speedily as possible at Niles. The order was promptly responded to by the Eighth regiment, Col. Wm. McNair, composed of inhabitants of the valley of the Raisin, one company from Adrian, two from Teeumseh, and one from Clinton, and it took up its line of march from Teeumseh by way of the Chicago turnpike, through Jonesville, Coldwater and Sturgis, to Niles, where the other regiments of the brigade were also assembled.

To rescue Chicago would be the most effectual way to protect their own homes and loved ones. It was better to meet the enemy before he entered their borders, than to wait and meet him at their own doors. In the order issued by Gen. Brown to Col. McNair occur these words, which I cannot forbear to quote: "Take no man with you who is not a volunteer. Let the timid return to their homes." The order was promulgated upon the parade of the regiment at Teeumseh, and those who did not choose to volunteer were directed to advance four paces in front. Not a man left the ranks.

The details of that expedition and of the war cannot be given here. Suffice to say that a force from the regular army under Gen. Atkinson succeeded in overpowering the Indians before they reached Chicago, capturing Black Hawk and putting an end to the war without the aid of our militia. Orders were received by Gen. Brown at Niles to disband the forces under his command, and the Lenawee regiment being honorably discharged, and



with the thanks of the commanding general for the promptness and alacrity with which they had responded to the call, and the faithful performance of duty, returned to their homes, where they were warmly welcomed ; their absence having deprived the settlements for the time being of most of their effective men, and leaving them quite defenceless in case of an attack from the Indians, which they feared.

Of the men who went in this expedition two deserted—all the rest remained true and showed their readiness to meet the savage foe, though happily they were spared the necessity. The men received from the United States one month's pay and 160 acres of land each.

The other war in which the county was involved, was the one known as the Toledo war. This, it will be remembered, was a contest in 1835, between Michigan, just then preparing to undergo its transformation from a Territory to a State, and the older and more powerful State of Ohio, for the possession of a strip of land, some eight miles in width at the east end and five miles at the west, on the southern border of Michigan, embracing of course, a portion of our goodly county of Lenawee, as well as the port and site of the present city of Toledo.

By the ordinance of 1787, the Magna Charta of that vast territory ceded by Virginia to the United States, lying northwest of the Ohio, out of which the great States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin have been successively formed, Congress was authorized to form one or two States in that portion of the country lying north of an east and west line drawn through the southerly bend or extreme of Lake Michigan—thus establishing that line as the southern boundary of such States ; and it was provided that whenever any of said States should have 60,000 free inhabitants therein, such State should be admitted into the Union on an equal footing with the original States, and should be at liberty to form a permanent constitution and State government.

By an act of Congress passed in 1805, the Territory of Michigan was organized, with a Territorial government, making its southern boundary the line before mentioned, and it was enacted that the inhabitants of the Territory should enjoy all the rights and privileges secured by the ordinance aforesaid.

The mouth of the Maumee and the disputed territory were north of this line, and of course within the limits of Michigan. But Ohio, when she came to form a State government, by her constitution adopted another line as her

northern boundary, so as to include within her boundaries the territory in question.

The details of this controversy cannot be given here. It would require too much time, and it belongs to the history of the State rather than of this county, though the county was directly interested and deeply involved in it.

Both Michigan and Ohio claimed the territory, and each called out a force of militia to enforce its claim to the possession of the same.

The force of Michigan, some 1,200 or 1,500 strong, a portion of them from this county, was under the command of Brig. Gen. Brown, in whose ability and discretion Acting Governor Mason manifested his confidence by selecting him for this delicate and responsible duty.

They marched to Toledo and held possession of the same for several weeks. The force of Ohio was also encamped in the neighborhood, and hostilities seemed imminent, but no actual fighting took place. Many amusing and ludicrous incidents occurred, so that after the affair was over it came to be regarded as a farce, though at the time threatening very serious consequences.

After remaining in this hostile attitude for a few weeks, the military forces on both sides were withdrawn, and the matter left to the decision of Congress.

The result was that Ohio, influential and powerful with her twelve votes in Congress, prevailed against her younger and weaker sister Michigan, with her single delegate, and he without the right of voting; and before Congress would admit her into the Union as a State, she was required to assent to the change in her boundaries, and to adopt the boundary claimed by Ohio; but in order to make her some amends the Northern Peninsula, then no part of Michigan, was offered her.

Michigan at first rejected this overture. A convention called to act upon it refused to give the assent required. Her people at the time felt keenly upon the subject. They felt that her right to the territory, under the ordinance and under the Act of Congress of 1805, was unquestionable; and there are few, in this State at least, who have examined the question, that do not regard it so to this day.

But this decision of the convention of Michigan did not finally prevail. A large and influential portion of the citizens, some from public considerations, and others, perhaps, from private reasons, thought it highly desirable that the State should be speedily admitted into the Union. Another convention was called, not by the Governor or by any legal authority, but by the

Democratic Central Committee, requesting the people in the several townships to elect delegates. The convention met, and in the name of the people of the State, gave the required assent. This, after considerable discussion, was accepted by Congress as a compliance with the condition, and the State was admitted by an act passed on the 27th of January, 1837, and thus the controversy ended.

The people of Michigan were ill satisfied at the time, being little aware of the mineral value of the Upper Peninsula which they acquired in lieu of the strip surrendered. But the subsequent development of that region has shown that they got an ample equivalent, and that the bargain, though in a manner forced upon them, turned out to be not a bad one for Michigan.

Another incident or two and we will end this imperfect sketch, already too long for this occasion, though there are materials at hand to fill a volume.

The Court House, erected in Adrian in 1839, as before mentioned, and containing the county offices, was destroyed by fire, March 14th, 1852, and with it all the records of the County Clerk's office, though fortunately the valuable records of the County Register and County Treasurer were saved. The Court House has never been rebuilt, and from that time, twenty-four years, the county has had none—very much to the inconvenience and not much to the credit of so large and populous and wealthy a county. The courts have been held in different places temporarily provided for them, first in one hall and then in another, and for a number of years in an old abandoned church.

Fellow citizens, my task as historian is done.

As during the century past, the United States as a people, a nation, have so marvelously, under the favor of Providence, grown and increased in all the elements of greatness and power, extending itself and its population from the narrow strip along the Atlantic, which it occupied in 1776, by a wide and magnificent belt across the heart of the entire continent to the Pacific; and as our own county has, on its smaller scale, during the half century, in like manner grown and developed and increased to take its place in the foremost rank of the counties of our own State, and to rival most of the agricultural counties in the older portions of the country, let us hope that the future has still greater things in store for us. Let us cherish union, and set our faces against everything calculated to create sectional strife and dissensions.

Hushed be the voice of party, and the noise of party strife this day, at

least, as we join together in its celebration as one people, having a common interest in that which it commemorates—happy that at the end of one hundred years the goodly heritage which our fathers bequeathed to us remains unimpaired for us to transmit to those that come after us; that our government, our institutions, and our union have survived the shock of war, foreign and domestic, and the perhaps still greater danger from corruption within.

As both the great political parties have united to put down treason and rebellion, so let both parties and all parties unite to rebuke corruption wherever found, in whatever party. And may the close of another century find us, as a people, as to-day, united, happy, and free.





























































































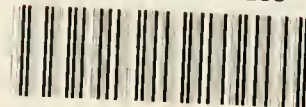








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